Met Office

October 2008

The averaging period used for the following assessment was 1961-1990.

UK overview

Maximum, minimum and mean daily temperatures were all below average across the UK. Most areas had their coldest October since 2003. Rainfall was well above average across north Wales and north-west England, with some areas having over double their average rainfall. Rainfall was also well above average in Scotland. Sunshine was generally above or well above average.

Gravesend (Kent) recorded a maximum temperature of 22.9 °C on 12th. Topcliffe (North Yorkshire) recorded a minimum temperature of -6.6 °C on 29th. Honister Pass (Cumbria) recorded 226.6 mm of rainfall on 25th. A torrential hailstorm in the Ottery St. Mary area of east Devon brought an estimated 100 mm of rain/hail in just a few hours early on 30th. A wind gust of 87 mph was recorded at Blackford Hill, Edinburgh on 25th.

England diary of highlights

Rainfall was well above average across the north-west, with some areas recording over double the average. Mean temperatures were below average, but with above average sunshine.

1st to 6th: The month started unsettled, as a north-westerly airflow brought below average temperatures. Weather fronts and troughs pushed down from the north-west on the 1st, 2nd and 3rd, bringing showers or longer spells of rain at times. A brief ridge early on the 4th was followed by a complex, active frontal system later on the 4th and early on the 5th. This gave a 24-hour rainfall total of 53.0 mm at Shap (Cumbria) on the 4th. This was followed by a ridge of high pressure on the 6th.

7th to 15th: The ridge of high pressure moved away eastwards on the 7th as Atlantic fronts spread outbreaks of rain across from the west. A southerly airflow developed and this introduced a spell of generally milder than average temperatures. On subsequent days during this period the airflow tended to favour a south-westerly direction. Weather fronts and troughs brought occasional rain, but interspersed with brief ridges of high pressure which brought drier and brighter interludes. Shap recorded a 24-hour rainfall total of 47.4 mm on the 10th. Gravesend (Kent) recorded a maximum temperature of 22.9 °C on 12th.

16th to 26th: A cold front cleared away south-eastwards early on the 16th introducing a colder north-westerly airflow. On subsequent days during this spell the airflow varied between north-westerly and south-westerly, bringing both mild and cool conditions, along with further spells of locally heavy rain and showers interspersed with drier, brighter intervals. Active Atlantic frontal systems and troughs brought further large rainfall totals during this period, with the last of these clearing away south-eastwards during the 26th. St. Mary's Airport (Isle of Scilly) recorded an hourly total of 20.8 mm on 20th. High 24-hour rainfall totals in Cumbria on 25th, with 79.8 mm at Shap (60.8 mm also recorded on 23rd), 68.6 mm at Levens Hall and 66.0 mm at Keswick.

27th to 31st: The 27th had a mixture of sunshine and showers, with a cold northerly airflow starting to introduce much colder conditions. The 28th and 29th were particularly cold and wintry for the time of year, with scattered showers of rain, hail, sleet and snow moving in from the north-west during the 28th. There were slight accumulations of snow in the south-east during the evening of the 28th, and snow settled in the London area for the first time in October since 1934. This was followed by a widespread frost overnight, with a minimum of -6.6 °C recorded at Topcliffe (North Yorkshire). The day of the 29th was also exceptionally cold, with Leek, Thorncliffe (Staffordshire) recording a maximum temperature of 3.1 °C. Some areas had their

coldest daily maximum or minimum October temperatures for over 50 years. The 29th was also notable for an area of low pressure moving southwards across western areas. This contributed to a torrential hail/thunderstorm in the Ottery St. Mary area of east Devon on the 29/30th, which caused major flooding problems. Ottery St. Mary, Kings School recorded a 27-hour rainfall total of 187 mm, with an estimated 160 mm of this falling in just three hours (return period >200 years).

Wales diary of highlights

Rainfall was well above average, especially in the north and north-west, with some areas recording over double the average. Mean temperatures were below average, but with above average sunshine..

1st to 6th: The month started on an unsettled note as a north-westerly airflow brought below average temperatures. Weather fronts and troughs pushed down from the north-west on the 1st, 2nd and 3rd, bringing showers and also some longer spells of rain. Thunder occurred in mid-Wales on the 1st, and a gust of 64 m.p.h. was recorded at Aberporth (Ceredigion) during the evening of the 2nd. A brief ridge of high pressure early on the 4th was followed by a complex, active frontal system later on the 4th and early on the 5th, with Capel Curig (Conwy) recording a 24-hour rainfall total of 89.6 mm on the 5th. This was then followed by a ridge of high pressure on the 6th.

7th to 15th: The ridge of high pressure moved away eastwards on the 7th as Atlantic fronts spread outbreaks of rain across from the west. A southerly airflow developed and introduced a spell of generally milder than average temperatures. On subsequent days during this period the airflow tended to favour a south-westerly direction. Weather fronts and troughs brought occasional rain, but interspersed with brief ridges of high pressure which brought drier and brighter interludes. Capel Curig recorded a 24-hour rainfall total of 66.8 mm on the 10th. The highest temperature during this period was 22.1°C at Rhandirmwyn (Carmarthenshire) on the 12th.

16th to 26th: A cold front cleared away south-eastwards early on the 16th introducing a colder north-westerly airflow. On following days the airflow varied between north-westerly and south-westerly, bringing both mild and cool conditions, along with further spells of locally-heavy rain and showers interspersed with drier, brighter intervals. Active Atlantic frontal systems and troughs brought further large rainfall totals during this period, with the last of these clearing away south-eastwards during the 26th. Capel Curig recorded a gust of 76 m.p.h. on the 23rd and 24-hour rainfall totals of 54.4 mm on the 19th, 58.0 mm on the 23rd and 92.4 mm on the 25th. Other high 24-hour rainfall totals on the 25th included 76.6 mm at Cwmystwyth (Ceredigion) and 56.4 mm at Trawsgoed (Ceredigion).

27th to 31st: The 27th had a mixture of sunshine and showers, with a cold northerly airflow starting to introduce much colder conditions. The 28th and 29th were particularly cold and wintry for the time of year, with scattered showers of rain, hail, sleet and snow moving in from the north-west during the 28th. This was followed by a widespread frost overnight. The 29th was exceptionally cold with Lake Vyrnwy (Powys) only recording a maximum temperature of 2.4 °C and Llysdinam (Powys) recording a minimum temperature of -4.5 °C. Some areas had their coldest October day for over 50 years. On the 29th an area of low pressure moved southwards across western areas, giving heavy rain and hail, with Aberdaron (Gwynedd) recording a 24-hour rainfall total of 41.0 mm.

Scotland diary of highlights

Well above average rainfall, particularly in southern and western Scotland. Mean temperatures below average, but with above average sunshine.

1st to 5th: The 1st and 2nd were cool with sunny intervals and showers, some heavy, and a northerly wind increased to gale force later on the 2nd. Bright and showery with winds easing on the 3rd. The 4th was cloudy

with outbreaks of rain, heavy at times. Snow was reported at Lerwick (Shetland) at midday with a temperature of just 0.3 °C. The 5th was sunny, with a few showers in the north.

6th to 14th: The 6th was mostly cloudy with rain. The 7th was cloudy and wet, especially in the south-west. Rain cleared east during the 8th, followed by isolated showers. The 9th was cloudy and wet, the most persistent rain in the south-west. The heavy rain continued in the south-west overnight and on the 10th, with Glenlee (Dumfries & Galloway) recording a 48-hour rainfall total of 76.8 mm on the 10th, leading to widespread flooding. The north brightened with Aboyne (Aberdeenshire) reaching a maximum temperature of 19.6 °C. The 11th was mainly sunny, although some thundery showers in the north-west. Mainly bright on the 12th, after the clearance of patchy fog. Rain across the north-west, pushed southwards on the 13th, followed by sunshine and showers. The showers were mainly across the north and north-west, where it was also windy. Bright across the north-east with an early ground frost on the 14th. Occasional showers further north with rain developing and clearing across the south.

15th to 25th: Early rain clearing on the 15th, then cooler with scattered showers and isolated thunder in the north. Scattered showers on the 16th, heavy and blustery in the north at first. The 17th was mostly cloudy and showery in the north-west, but brighter in the east. The 18th was bright with showers. Severe gales affected the north-west on the 19th with Stornoway recording a gust of 69 m.p.h. Rain was heavy in places, bringing 24-hour rainfall totals of 50.6 mm at Skye Lusa and 47.4 mm at Eskdalemuir (Dumfries & Galloway) on the 19th. Sunshine and blustery showers on the 20th, some heavy and prolonged across the west. Windy with gales, severe at times. Blustery on the 21st, with frequent and heavy showers (lying snow above 600 metres). Showers on the 22nd over the north and west with rain reaching the west coast during the evening. The 23rd was very windy with heavy rain in the west, with Skye Lusa recording a 48-hour rainfall total of 86.8 mm on the 22nd/23rd. A gust of 82 m.p.h. was reported at Edinburgh Blackford Hill on the 23rd. Sunny intervals and heavy showers on the 24th. The 25th was wet and windy with severe gale or storm-force south-west winds and a gust of 93 m.p.h. was recorded at Lerwick on the 25th.

26th to 31st: Sunny intervals and showers on the 26th, with snow falling on the mountains. Showers in the north on the 27th, turning wintry to low level later. Frequent snow showers affected the north on the 28th, elsewhere mainly sunny. Exceptionally cold on the 28th, with Aviemore (Highland) only recording a maximum temperature of 2.3 °C and some areas had their coldest October day for over 50 years. Scattered showers in the north and east on the 29th and 30th, some of the showers wintry at times. Aviemore reported snow lying at 0900 UTC on the 27th, 28th and 29th, with a depth of 5 cm on the 27th. Altnaharra (Highland) recorded a minimum temperature of -6.4 °C on the 30th. Scattered showers on the 31st, mainly in the north, east and the Borders, although mostly dry and bright elsewhere.

Northern Ireland diary of highlights

Mean temperatures were below average. Rainfall and sunshine were both above average.

1st to 5th: The 1st and 2nd were cool with showers and sunny intervals. Northerly winds reached gale force in exposed areas later on the 2nd, with Orlock Head (County Down) recording a gust of 70 m.p.h. Sunshine and showers again on the 3rd but with winds easing. The 4th was cloudy with rain, heavy at times, but becoming drier and clearer during the evening. Lough Navar Forest (County Fermanagh) recorded a 24-hour rainfall total of 32.2 mm on the 4th. A mostly dry and sunny day on the 5th, with just a few showers along the north coast.

6th to 14th: The 6th was mostly cloudy with patchy rain. The 7th was mostly cloudy with rain, occasionally heavy in the east. Isolated showers on the 8th, otherwise mainly dry. The 9th and 10th were cloudy with rain at times. Helens Bay (County Down) recorded a maximum temperature of 17.9 °C on the 10th. The 11th was fine with sunny spells, as was the 12th after the clearance of early mist. Rain pushed south-eastwards through the 13th with sunny or clear spells and occasional showers following. Rain over southern areas, cleared eastwards through the afternoon of the 14th, with sunny spells following.

15th to 25th: Early mist clearing on the 15th, then patchy rain, and turning cooler with scattered showers later. Scattered showers on the 16th, but dying out through the evening. The 17th and 18th were cloudy with a few showers, though some sunny intervals developed. The 19th was windy with rain at times. Showers, heavy and prolonged at times on the 20th. Windy with gales, locally severe in the north-west, easing through the afternoon. A blustery day on the 21st with heavy showers, especially in the north. Bright on the 22nd with showers mostly in the west and north and fresh south-west winds. The 23rd was wet and windy, but drier and less windy weather followed by the evening. Sunny spells and scattered showers on the 24th. Dull, wet and windy on the 25th but rain dying out during the evening and winds easing.

26th to 31st: Sunshine and showers on the 26th and 27th, but with clear spells in the south and east during the evening. The 28th was cold and showery, with showers falling as snow to low levels at times. The Glenshane pass (County Londonderry) was blocked for a time. Showery on the 29th and 30th, the showers wintry at times. Katesbridge (County Down) recorded a minimum temperature of -4.5 °C on the 29th. Lough Fea (County Tyrone) recorded a maximum temperature of just 3.4 °C on the 29th and recorded a highest hourly depth of 8 cm of lying snow on the 29th (4 cm at 0900 UTC on the 30th). Mainly dry and bright on the 31st.

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